



Town of Wendell

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2022 SPONSORED BY THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD
THE TOWN OF WENDELL IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER

IMPORTANT DATES

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING: SAVE THE DATE!
October 26, 7:00PM at the Town Hall, 6 Center St.

Please take a few minutes to read through the newsletter with updates from town departments. If there is town information you would like to see here, please let us know.

Sincerely, Your Selectboard
Laurie DiDonato, Chair
Dan Keller, Co-Chair
Gillian Budine, Member
Town Coordinator, Glenn Johnson-Mussad

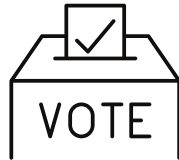
Contact the Selectboard or
Town coordinator at (978) 544-3395 ext. 100

Town Clerk News
Election Day November 8th, polls are open from 7 am to 8 pm.

Early voting hours:
October 22 and 29, 9 am - 2 pm,
November 2, 5-7 PM;
November 4, 3-5 PM

Vote by Mail application deadline is November 1st.
If you registered for Vote by Mail in September, you will receive your November ballot at the same address.

If you have any questions about the upcoming election, please contact the Town Clerk at townclerk@wendellmass.us or 978-544-3396 ex 2.



NEW TAX COLLECTOR SOFTWARE AND IMPROVED ONLINE PAYMENT SYSTEM

The Tax Collector is moving to new tax collection software to improve integration with other town departments. As a result, you will see new formats for bills, receipts, and reports from the Collector. You will still click the **PAY TAXES ONLINE** link on the town website home page at www.wendellmass.us to make online payments using a credit/debit card or bank account. The link will bring you to a new page and, from there, to the new portal where you can find and pay bills and review your billing history. Once you place bills in your cart and proceed through checkout, you will be taken to **UNIPAY** to process your payment as before.

In the new **PAY TAXES ONLINE** system, you can search for your bills and history online by name, address, or bill #, whether or not you plan to make an online payment. In addition, all your tax payments, whether made by mail, 24 hr. dropbox, online, or in-person, will be updated weekly and reflected in the online balances. You will also have direct access to payment history and reports, including payments by calendar year, for preparing your income taxes. Contact the Tax Collector at Town Clerk at taxcollector@wendellmass.us or 978-544-3396 ex 1.

SIGN UP FOR WENDELL ALERTS via CODE RED



Don't wait! Sign up today!



Ways to sign up to receive Wendell Alerts:

- Visit the Town of **Wendell Website** to access the link to enroll online OR
- Text "**WendellAlerts: to 99411 to receive link to enroll**
- Download the **CodeRED Mobile Alert app** available in the App Store or Google Play

NEWS FROM THE LEVERETT/WENDELL POLICE SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

On September 12th the Leverett/Wendell Police Services Advisory Committee met for the second time. The Committee was created to help guide the police partnership between the two towns, which is now almost 2 years old. It consists of 3 representatives from each town—one Selectboard member, one Finance Committee member, and one member of the general public. At the moment the Wendell reps are Dan Keller, Thomas Richardson, and Anna Weatherby, respectively.

The general consensus at the meetings has been that the partnership is working very well, and representatives reported hearing positive feedback about the arrangement from the general public.

The main agenda item for the meeting on the 12th was future staffing of the department. Chief Scott Minckler presented a proposal to add one more full time officer to the present roster of 3, and eventually reduce the part time staff from 3 currently to none. He explained that the state's move to reduce the use of part time police officers has made them hard to find, which has threatened to reduce coverage of the towns below the desired level. He also noted that one currently part time officer, Meghan Gallo, who is also the animal control officer, is available to fill a new full time position. The Committee expressed its understanding of the need to respond to the lack of part time availability, and support for the proposal to hire officer Gallo, but stopped short of making a formal recommendation for adding a new full time officer, largely out of concern for the added cost. We agreed to send the proposal to the two town finance committees for their thoughts and recommendations.

The total cost, including benefits, for a new full time officer would be approximately \$70,000. Savings from eliminating part time work would reduce that cost, and the remainder would be shared between the two towns. Committee members agreed to take the proposal into further consideration, wait to hear the thoughts of the finance committees, and work on a recommendation at future meetings. It scheduled the next meeting, to review the minutes of the meeting on September 12, for September 20th at 6 pm on Zoom. The full minutes of the meeting on the 12th will be made available on the Wendell list serve and the Wendell website.

WENDELL FREE LIBRARY NEWS

On September 15 Miriam Warner signed a contract to be the new director of the Wendell Free Library. We're elated that she consented to continue as our permanent director after filling in as our interim director. A reception for Miriam will be held on Saturday, October 15 from 1 – 3 pm at the library. Everyone is invited.

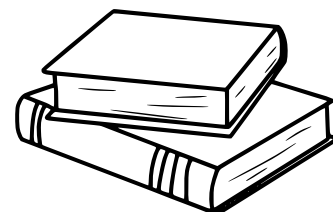
Currently we are formulating a plan to remove several trees infected with the emerald ash borer. One of the trees is adjacent to the play structure in the playground, which will make cutting down that tree challenging. We're in the process of assessing solutions. Our goal is to reuse as much of the play structure as possible, and we welcome your ideas to improve on the structure we already have.

The basketball court has been repaved and lines painted for pickle ball and half-court basketball. The pickle ball net and paddles are stored inside the library. We're considering other ideas to make the net and paddles available outside. Paddles and balls for ping pong are currently stored under the ping pong table in the basketball court.

We're excited about new and ongoing programs at the library: Conversational Spanish on Wednesdays from 7 to 8 PM; Wednesday morning Playgroup with Sylvia at 10 AM; Art Group on Tuesday from 5 to 6 PM; Sunday Free Yoga at 10 AM; Fiber Arts/ Handwork/Mending Circle at 6:30 PM on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month; Adult Book Group from 10 to 11:30 on Zoom every fourth Monday; and LEGO club on Fridays at 4 PM. With the CNC we're also hosting a five-week Music and Movement series on Thursdays at 10 AM, starting on September 29.

The library has three new patron computers with Microsoft Suite available for use. And we're excited to announce that our patrons can now sign up for Kanopy, a video streaming service that provides access to thousands of critically acclaimed movies, documentaries, and children's fare.

Come in and explore all that's new at the library.



BOARD OF HEALTH UPDATES

Personnel changes:

Paul Wanta, our Board of Health Nurse, has resigned from his position effective August 31. He has accepted a Director's position within the nursing program at Greenfield Community College, where he has been teaching nursing students for some time now. Paul served our board and our townspeople with dedication since shortly before the Covid-19 pandemic began. We have been fortunate to have him with us during the toughest times of the virus. We will miss him, but we know he will be a significant asset to the GCC nursing program and its future nurses. Best wishes, Paul, and thank you for your exemplary service to the town of Wendell.

Christy Page, an epidemiologist who works for the North Quabbin Health Collaborative to which we belong, will now be doing disease surveillance and case follow-up for Wendell, as well as for New Salem, Petersham, Warwick, and Orange.

We are pleased to announce a new Wendell Board of Health member, Jim Frank. Jim is a semi-retired surgeon who moved to Wendell earlier this summer. He asked to join our team to fill an open position, and he is very interested in learning more about public health. He is a welcome addition to our board, and we enjoy working with him.

Covid-19 status:

Due to greater immunity levels in people from vaccinations and prior infections, Covid-19 restrictions and protocols have been relaxed at the federal and state levels. However, the virus is still with us, and over 400 people die from it per day in this country. Based on positive PCR cases, there has been a slight uptick in cases in recent weeks. For updated isolation and exposure protocols, please go to:

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-isolation-and-exposure-guidelines>

For your own safety and that of others, please consider wearing a high quality mask when in crowded places.

PLEASE NOTE:

Due to lack of funding from Congress, as of September 2 of this year free Covid-19 at-home test kits are no longer available through the U. S. Postal Service. The new vaccine boosters are available for free to anyone who wants one, but funding for them may run out as early as January of 2023, when they will be transitioned to the commercial market. Please plan your vaccine appointments accordingly. The same is true for the preventative treatment Evushield. Funding for Paxlovid, an oral antiviral treatment, is expected to run out in mid-2023. Hopefully, Congress will vote to renew funding for Covid-19 tests and treatments in the near future.

In the meantime, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health is once again sending free at-home Covid-19 rapid response test kits to municipalities. Wendell will be receiving ihealth test kits with expiration dates that have been extended by six months, to at least January of 2023. They should be delivered by mid-October. We will let you know when they are available and where you can get them.

Vaccine news:

As of September 1, updated Pfizer and Moderna Covid-19 boosters were authorized by the FDA and recommended by the CDC. They were scheduled to arrive in Massachusetts the week of September 5. The vaccines are designed to target the original strain of SARS-CoV2 as well as the predominant BA.4 and BA.5 lineages of the Omicron variant, and should offer better protection from these variants over the winter. Individuals ages 18 and over can receive the Moderna booster, and those over 12 can receive the Pfizer booster. Pediatric versions of these boosters are in development. Previous monovalent Covid-19 vaccines are no longer authorized for boosters for those over the age of 12. They are still used for the 2-shot primary series for the unvaccinated and as boosters for those under 12. You can get these new boosters at the same places you have gotten your other vaccines. For help in finding a site, visit

The new one-shot boosters should be given at least 2 months after your last vaccine dose. If you have had a Covid-19 infection, you should wait at least 3 months after your recovery to receive your boosters. You may get these shots whether you have had previous boosters or not, but you must have received your 2-dose primary series first. For more information visit www.mass.gov/covidbooster. Seek advice from your primary care health professional if you have questions or concerns.

And don't forget to get your annual flu shot as well.

Monkeypox: Monkey pox continues to spread in our country, but no cases have been reported in our area as of this writing. If you are at high risk and would like to get vaccinated, please go to <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/monkeypox-vaccinations>

Drought: Drought is a concern of us all, especially as we get our water from private wells. For help with your well, please go to: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/information-for-private-well-owners-during-a-drought>



**Contact the Wendell Board of Health at
978-544-3395 ext. 106 or boardofhealth@wendellmass.us**

TOWN OF WENDELL ROAD COMMISSION

submitted by Chair, Phil Delorey

Road Supervisor Retiring

Rich Wilder has decided to take his retirement, and he will be greatly missed by all of us. Rich has been the driving force for all those highway projects, and he's been at it for over 13 years. Not only has Rich managed to keep all of the Town equipment in tip-top shape over all those years, but he has been right alongside the other crew members when it was time to get out on the roads, patching holes, operating the grader on our 38 miles of dirt roads and spending many snowing days and nights plowing snow. He's kept us safe in our travels in any number of ways and been able and willing to answer the calls for emergencies, day and night.

Thank you for it all Rich, we will miss you – Happy retirement!

Project News

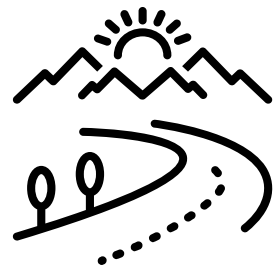
- The Culvert project at Mormon Hollow Road is moving along well, with the Culvert getting delivered on September 19. It's been a long project for everyone having to find alternate routes, but especially for the folks at the Diemand Farm. Now that the actual culvert is in place, the work on putting the roadway back together can begin. There are embankments to rebuild, earth to move and compact, paving and guardrails to install. The goal is to have the road usable around the beginning of November, and we'll all keep a close eye on the progress.
- The Bridge replacement at Kentfield Road is also moving along, although the actual bridge is not on site yet. The Bridge will a one piece delivery when it comes, and the guard rails and decking will be made of pressure treated lumber, primarily because it will last longer.
- We will most likely not be doing any paving this fall, but are making plans to work on several sites in the spring.
- Road Commission members will be meeting with Franklin County Council of Gov't staff later in September to begin a careful review of the intersection at Locke Hill Road and Lockes Village Road. We have numerous and decades long complaints and concerns raised about the nature of the traffic at that site, and reports of many close calls or near misses that appear to be the result of traffic patterns that cross each other and difficult visuals due to the curve that is at the intersection.

Snowy Roads Ahead!

We all think (we wish) it is still summer, but soon there will be leaves on the roads, followed by bits of ice and snow, and slippery driving. It may be a good time to think about checking the tread depth and condition of the tires, and other cold weather car maintenance. We know it's early for a snow warning, but every year we get cars off the road, especially with the first storms of the season. It's also time for a reminder that the road Crew does the best they can with soon to be changing conditions, conditions that are often different from one side of town to the other.

Employee news

The Town has a new employee on the Road Crew – Kevin Bickford comes to Wendell from the Warwick Road Crew, with years of equipment operating experience. So far he's shown a real talent for making the road grader work well, and that works for everyone. He's going to be a great addition to the Crew.





CONTACTING THE ASSESSORS

If you have questions regarding your real estate or personal property assessment or questions regarding motor vehicle abatement, etc., please contact the Assessors or their representatives via the following methods:

Phone number for Board of Assessors – 978-544-3395 X 4

Email (preferred method): assessors@wendellmass.us

Wendell has contracted with Regional Resource Group Inc. (RRG) to provide online Assessing services. You can use the **Virtual Assessor via the Wendell Town website** to chat with a live agent who can answer questions and assist you in your assessing department needs.

Immediate attention Monday – Friday 9 am – 3 pm. During off hours you may leave your information and an agent will get back to you within 1 business day.

Two ways to reach this site:

<https://www.wendellmass.us/governance/board-of-assessors.html>

Assessor's Town of Wendell, MA – click on the first option and it brings you right to the Assessors page.



Services available:

- Abutter's Lists
- Change of Address
- Motor Vehicle Abatement
- Property Record Card Request
- Senior or Veterans Exemptions
- Valuation Questions

**Wendell Selectboard
Town Offices
PO BOX 41
Wendell, MA 01379**

**Prsrt Std
US Postage
PAID
Permit #183
Greenfield, MA**

**RESIDENT
WENDELL, MA 01379**

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- Special Town Meeting
- Tax Collector update
- Board of Health updates
- Library update
- Sign up for Wendell Alerts

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Or visit the Town Website for town information: www.wendellmass.us**

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**RESIDENT
WENDELL DEPOT, MA 01380**

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**RESIDENT
MILLERS FALLS, MA 01349**

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